

US 34 Improvement Study Workshop

The first Public Informational Workshop for the Study of US Route 34 from Gletty Road in Sandwich, IL DeKalb County to Chilton Way in Plano, IL Kendall County was held on April 23, 2009 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at City of Sandwich, IL Council Chambers at 144 E. Railroad Street located one block north of US 34.

Workshop Notification/Advertisement

Advertisements for the meeting were published in the Sandwich Record on April 1 and 15, in the Plano Record on April 2 and 16 and in the Ottawa Times on April 10 and 20. There also was an article in the Ottawa Times on April 13, 2009. In addition a press release was put out on March 25, 2009 to the above news papers as well as to the local radio station, WSPY. A letter of invitation was mailed to all adjacent property owners totaling 128 letters. Letters or e-mails were sent out to individuals who had requested, through the project website, to be on the mailing list as well as to all Community Working Group (CWG) members.

Purpose/Goals of the Workshop

The purpose of the public workshop was to introduce the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, as well as to share with the public, work that has been done with the CWG. CSS is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multi-modal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings—its "context." Through early, frequent, and meaningful communication with stakeholders, and a flexible and creative approach to design, the resulting projects should improve safety and mobility for the traveling public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the settings through which they pass.

During the Workshop attendees were given a background on the study area, the CSS process and given interactive opportunities to provide their input. The input from the meeting will be used to further develop and refine the purpose and need for the project.

Workshop Exhibits and Materials

Individuals signed in and received an informational brochure and comment sheet. (attached) Representatives from IDOT and the Consultant Team were available to answer questions and gather input. The Council Chambers was set up with five areas to walk attendees through the process.

Area 1: Existing Conditions

To give attendees a background for the study, and present existing road conditions. Area 1 had boards that included the overall location map, a summary of crashes, a large aerial map as well as a series of aerial strip maps centered on the US 34 corridor at a scale of 1 inch = 100 feet. The aerial strip maps showed the right-of-way lines and existing improvements from the survey data.

Area 2: CSS Process

To give attendees a background for the CSS process, Area 2 included boards highlighting the project milestones, the CSS process flowchart, as well as a list of the Community Working Group and Project Study Group members.

Area 3: Problem Identification/Draft Vision Statement

Area 3 listed the Issues/Needs/Concerns along US 34 identified by the CWG and had an easel with a blank sheet for attendees to add their Issues/Needs/Concerns. Adjacent to the Issues/Needs/Concerns identification there was the vision statement for the US 34 Improvement which was drafted by the CWG based on their Issues/Needs/Concerns.

Area 4: Evaluation Criteria

This area included the evaluation criteria identified by the CWG. Again there was an easel with a blank sheet for attendees to add their Evaluation Criteria or the opportunity to add dots to vote for evaluation criteria that is important to them.

Area 5: Initial Alternatives Development

In Area 5 there were several sets of the same aerial maps as displayed in Area 1. Here attendees were encouraged to draw suggested alternatives and make comments.

A computer displaying the project website, along with the opportunities for feedback was highlighted. Several other opportunities were provided to the attendees to contribute input to the study including a tape recorder for oral comments, a comment sheet preaddressed to Dan Mestelle at IDOT as well as several comment boxes in the meeting room.

Workshop Results

Workshop Attendance

The meeting was attended by 70 people not including representatives of IDOT and the consultant team. Attendees included residents, business owners, commuters and City Officials from Sandwich and Plano. Staff from IDOT departments included Studies and Plans, Program Development, Environment and Land Acquisition.

Workshop Comment Summary

The general consensus seemed to be that there is currently substantial traffic congestion on this section of US 34 and that it is anticipated to become worse in the future.

There were 24 written comment forms received at the Workshop and no oral comments recorded. Comments received during the Workshop are summarized in the table below, categorized into the three areas: Problem Identification, Evaluation Criteria and Solutions, or Alternatives:

US 34 Improvement Comment Summary	
	Number Received
Issues/Needs/Concerns (Problem Identification)	
Sight issue with curve at Davis St.	2
Comments regarding Fairwind Blvd (not relevant to the US 34 Improvement Study)	2
Evaluation Criteria	
Need to accommodate pedestrians	4
Property impact concerns	9
Solutions – Alternatives	
Support of one-way couple	2
Support of by-pass	2
Support of Widening	9
Support 3 lane	1
Support 4 lane	2
Support 5 lane	2
Against one-way couple	2
Against by-pass	6

Against Widening	2
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Overall the range of suggested solutions includes the following alternatives developed by the CWG and Public Workshop attendees:

- Do nothing with improvements to signals and intersections;
- By-pass,
- Widen on existing alignment and
- One-way couple.

Next Steps

The next step for the study will be to hold a Project Study Group meeting to review the public input and suggested alternatives. This will be followed by a Community Working Group Meeting to review the alternatives suggested to date and compare them to the Evaluation Criteria developed.

Next PSG Meeting: June 2009

Next CWG Meeting: Summer 2009

Next Workshop: Summer/Fall 2009